

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EMIN, TH

SUBJ: LABOR DEVELOPMENTS

REF: BANGKOK 1231 B) BANGKOK 1338

1. PRACHATIPATAI THAI LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER JAN 28 CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH SUPHAP SUGAN, A REPRESENTATIVE OF TIN MINERS IN PHUKET PROVINCE. SINCE JAN 24, WORKERS HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE AT THREE TIN-DREDGING COMPANIES, AO KHAM TIN, THUNG HARBOR AND SOUTHERN KINTA, ALL OWNED BY THE SAME BRITISH-MALAYSIAN INTERESTS. ALTHOUGH THE STRIKE REPORTEDLY AROSE OVER AN ASSAULT ON A LABORER BY A MANAGEMENT OFFICIAL, SUPHAP GAVE THE WALKOUT A DISTINCTLY POLITICAL TONE WHEN HE DESCRIBED THE STRIKE AS A BATTLE AGAINST FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND EXPLOITATION OF THAILAND'S NATURAL RESOURCES. IN THE INTERVIEW, SUPHAP CONTENDS HE IS NOW IN BANGKOK TO RALLY SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER, THE LABOR COORDINATION CENTER, THE RESOURCE PROTECTION FRONT AND THE ANTI-DICTATORSHIP FRONT, ALL LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS WITH SUBSTANTIAL STUDENT INVOLVEMENT.

2. COMMENT: PAT LYONS, A UNION CARBIDE OFFICIAL SECONDED TO BILLITON NOW THAT UNION CARBIDE NO LONGER HAS AN INTEREST IN THE FORMER TEMCO OPERATION, SAID THE STRIKE IS ANOTHER WAY OF GETTING THE BIGGER COMPANIES TO STOP

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OPERATIONS AND MAKE WAY FOR THE SMALL "ILLEGAL" MINERS

(REF A).

3. MEANWHILE MANAGEMENT OF COLGATE-PALMOLIVE HAS BEEN PROMISED AN ANSWER TO THEIR APPEAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER BY JANUARY29 (REFTEL B). STRIKE LEADERS HAVE OFFERED TO AGREE TO COMPULSORY ARBITRATION IF COLGATE AGREES TO THE PAYMENT OF STRIKE PAY, THEYEAR END BONUS, AND VACATION PAY LOST DURING THE STRIKE. THE COMPANY IS UNLIKELY TO ENTER COMPULSORY ARBITRATION WITH THESE ONEROUS PRE- CONDITIONS. COMPANY OFFICIALS INDICATE THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD SUPPORT THEM IN TERMINATING THE STRIKE BECAUSE COLGATE HAS SCRUPULOUSLY FOLLOWED LABOR REQUIREMENTS AND THE MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS WHO WISH RETURN TO WORK ARE ALSO PETITIONING THE PRIME MINISTER TO INTERVENE AND END THE STRIKE.

WHITEHOUSE

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